

14
SOME 3
SHORT and PLAIN
DIRECTIONS

For the Spending of

One Day well ;

BY WHICH

(If every Day carefully observed)

A Man may be much enabled,

(Through God's Grace)

TO SPEND

His whole LIFE well.

By the Author of *The Answer to all Excuses and Pretences for not coming to the Holy Communion.*

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

Pray without ceasing, 1 Theff. v. 17.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, Prov. iv. 23.

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P R E F A C E.

Altho' the Design of this little Book be not to instruct a Christian in the whole of his Duty, but only to furnish him with some few Directions, which may be of constant and daily use to him; yet I am very much inclined to think, that if once a Man brings himself (through the Grace of God) to a constant habit of observing the Rules which are here set down, he will find a religious and virtuous Life in all Points to be not only so easy, but delightful also, as never to break off the Course of it while he has any time to live.

As, therefore, I would earnestly persuade every man by reading and hearing of the holy Scriptures, and other religious Books and Discourses, to endeavour to get a full and comprehensive knowledge of his Duty in all its branches; so will I venture in a particular manner to recommend the following Directions to him, beseeching him daily and hourly to weigh and consider them, and to have his Thoughts almost continually upon them, until he renders them familiar both to his memory and practice.

And if he be a Parent, I would not only put him in mind of setting a good and virtuous Example before his Children, but also desire him to make a trial of their getting by heart all the short Prayers and Ejaculations hereafter set down, and often examine them what they are to say at their going to Bed, at their first awaking, at their putting on their Cloaths, &c. that by this means Virtue and true Piety may take firm hold of them, before they come to be exposed to the Temptations of the World.

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SOME

SHORT and PLAIN

DIRECTIONS

For the spending of One Day well, &c.

1. **H**AVING over Night resolved to spend the next Day as an honest Man, and a good Christian ought to do, a little before you betake yourself to your Rest, say the following short Prayer, not hastily and confusedly (as the Custom is with many when they address themselves to God) but carefully, attentively, and with all the Deliberation that may be.

O Lord God, make me, I beseech thee, truly penitent for all my Sins past; careful and watchful against them for the time to come, and unfeignedly thankful for all the Mercies and Blessings which thou hast vouchsafed unto me in the whole course of my Life. Pardon whatever I have done amiss, for the sake of Christ Jesus, who died for me; and give me the Grace and Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be enabled to spend the whole remainder of my Life in a true and faithful Obedience to thy Laws. At this time particularly I beseech thee, O Lord, to grant me such rest and refreshment this Night, as may help to fit and prepare me to spend the ensuing Day, as I have resolved, in thy fear and service. All which I beg of thine in-

finite Mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

And then as you are undressing yourself, going into your Bed, and settling to sleep, think with yourself, that as you now put off your Cloaths, and lay yourself down in your Bed to rest; so, within a few Days, the time shall certainly come, when your Body shall be wrapt in a winding-sheet, and laid in the Grave: Upon which occasion, say after this, or the like manner: *Good God, give me thy Grace, I beseech thee, that I may ever be mindful of my Death, and always prepared for it. And whenever my Soul shall depart from my Body, O receive it into Bliss and Happiness. And as I hope through thy Mercy, that when this Night is ended, I shall rise from my Bed in health to do thee service; so grant that, at the last Day, my Body may be raised from the Grave, and reunited to my Soul, that I may dwell with thee, and praise thee to all Eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

2. As often as you shall happen to awake in the Night, call God into your Thoughts; and lift up your Heart to him in some short Ejaculation: As, *Lord, bless and protect me the Remainder of this Night, and for evermore; O thou who never sleepest, watch over me who am unable without thee to help myself, And then compose yourself quietly to sleep again.*

3. When the Morning comes, suffer not the World, nor any thing which belongs to it, to take Possession of your Thoughts, until you have dedicated yourself unto Almighty God: Which do in these, or the like Words, as soon as you are well awake: *O God, I thank thee that thou hast not shut me up this Night in perpetual Darkness; but hast of thy Goodness added one day more to my Life. O grant that I may so employ both this, and all the rest of my Days in thy Service, that in the end I may be a Partaker*

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taker of *Life everlasting*; through the merits and mediation of *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

4. Lye no longer in your Bed than is proper and necessary for your moderate Refreshment; nor waste any part of your precious time in Idleness: But rise as soon as conveniently you can; and put yourself in a posture for the necessary and useful business of the day. And as you first begin to raise yourself, say these, or the like Words: *Lord, as I now rise from my bed in health of body (blessed be thy holy name for it) so grant me thy Grace to spend my time here in such a manner, as at the last day I may obtain a joyful Resurrection to everlasting Life, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.*

5. As you are dressing yourself say, *Lord, as I cover my Body with these Garments, that my nakedness may not be exposed to the Eyes of the World; so give me thy Grace that my Soul may be cloathed with Righteousness, that Sin may not expose me to eternal shame and punishment at the last great Day, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

6. And if you are putting on any thing by way of Ornament, say thus: *Lord, if cleansing and adorning my Body would render me as comely and acceptable in thy sight, as such things commonly do in the eyes of the World; what care and pains would I take that no spot, nor any indecency should appear about me? but alas! what trifles are these things to thee? Poor Lazarus was clothed in rags, and his Body all loathsoms and deformed with sores, Luke xvi. 20. yet his Soul was beautiful, and adorned with piety; and that made him acceptable to thee; when at the same time the rich man, with all his pure and fine linen, was utterly rejected. Whatever sort of apparel my Body is cloathed with, O let not my Soul want the wedding Garment of true holiness, that I be not for ever cast out from thy presence, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

7. As soon as you are dress'd, retire yourself to your Closet, if you have one ; or else to a Garden, Field, or some private corner of the House. And if you are Master of your own leisure, or if it be the Lord's Day, that you are free from other Business ; spend some time in reading attentively some part, either of the holy Scriptures, or of some other good Book, which may help to teach and stir you up to your Duty : And when you have done, address yourself to God in Prayer. For your direction wherein, there are so many excellent Forms already publish'd in divers Books of Piety and Devotion, that it is needless to set down one here at large. But let your business be what it will, and never so urgent, yet do not any day enter upon it before you have offered up your Devotions to Almighty God, at least in such a short Form as this : *Blessed Lord ! I return thee humble and hearty thanks for all the Mercies and Blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which thou hast vouchsafed to me, and to all men ; I acknowledge myself to have been a great sinner, and therefore to be unworthy of all thy favours. But, Lord, give me Grace to repent ; and pardon all my sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the whole world. For whose sake also, I beseech thee to give both to me and all men, all such things as thou seest to be necessary both for our Souls and Bodies. Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* And if the Place into which you are retired be secret from the sight of all Men, offer up your Prayers to God on your Knees : But if it be not, you may pray as you stand, or as you walk, that you may not seem to desire to be *seen of Men*, Mat. vi. 5. And if your Heart be truly devout and humble, your Prayer will be accepted, whatever Posture your Body is in.

8. As for the Lord's Day ; let it be your constant care to spend it always (as much as human Infirmary shall permit) in the Worship of God both publick

and private; in reading and hearing his holy Word, and such good Books or Discourses as are agreeable thereto; and works of Charity and Compassion to such as are in distress or poverty: Avoiding not only all Sports and Pastimes (as they are called) but also the giving or receiving of any Visits, except such as Charity and Christianity do oblige you to. And altho' upon such other Days, as by the Church are appointed to be kept holy, we may innocently take a greater liberty; yet even upon those days also, according as we have leisure for it, we should not fail to spend somewhat more of our time in exercises of Piety and Religion, than what, it may be, our constant business will at other times permit us to do.

9. But my design at present, is chiefly to direct you, how the common and ordinary Days of every Week are to be spent. To proceed therefore: As soon as you have performed your Morning Devotions, then set yourself to some honest business, whereby you may be the better enabled to do good, both to yourself and others: And, except your health do necessarily require it, never spend a whole Day (or very rarely) in what we call Recreation; and much less in downright Idleness: Remembring that, at the last Day, you will be called to a strict account how you have spent that precious time which was given you to do good, and to work out your Salvation. Now the morning being allowed by all to be the best time for business, be sure that you constantly (or generally at least) thus employ it. And if you have no other necessary or useful business to engage you, betake yourself to the reading of some good Book, whereby you may improve your Understanding, and become both wiser and better. And before you enter upon business each day, put up this short Ejaculation: *Good God, be pleased fo*

to prevent and direct me by thy Grace, that I may follow my calling and worldly Business honestly and uprightly, avoiding all cheating and lying, and all manner of deceit; and so endeavouring to make provision for myself and Family here, as that I may not forfeit that eternal provision which thou hast made for me in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

10. When it is Noon, sit down to your Meat, (except upon such days as you think it proper to keep a Fast) and never forget to crave God's Blessing upon your Food before you eat it; nor be ashamed of so good a Practice, however with many it be grown out of a fashion. And take especial care that you be not guilty of any Excess, either in eating or drinking; but *put a knife to thy throat*, that is, curb or restrain thy desires, *if thou be a man given to Appetite*, Prov. xxiii. 2. And when at any time you are to sit down to a Feast, or to such fare as is better than ordinary, whether it be eating or drinking, at home or abroad, beg privately of God to keep you from all Excess; using this, or the like short Form: *O Lord, teach me, I pray thee in the midst of Plenty to study and practise Temperance, that while I am refreshing and supporting my frail Body, I may not destroy my precious and immortal Soul; thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.* And this same Practice must be repeated in the Evening, if you eat any Supper, or take any Repast at that time.

11. When you have done your Meal, give thanks after Meat; and then privately to yourself, use this, or the like short Ejaculation: *Lord, as thou hast been pleased to give me food for the sustaining of my frail Body (for which I most humbly thank thee) so be thou pleased to afford me thy Grace, for the strengthening and confirming my Soul in piety and virtue. And grant that both my body and soul may al-*
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ways be dedicated to thee, and employed in thy service, and to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12. Altho' the greatest part of the Afternoon also ought to be spent in some honest business and employment, yet such is the frailty of our nature, that sometimes it is even necessary that we should a little refresh and divert ourselves with what we commonly call *recreation*; under which I also comprehend chearful and innocent Conversation with our Neighbours.

13. Now when at any time you are going, for a while, to lay your business aside, and thus to recreate yourself, lift up your thoughts before-hand to God, after this manner: *Lord, as thou hast been pleased to allow me to refresh my frail nature with a little innocent chearfulness; grant that I may always make use of this liberty with such prudence and caution, as not to forfeit that everlasting joy which I hope for in the world to come, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

14. Run not hastily upon any sort of Recreation: But first consider whether it be innocent, and then be sure you spend not too much time at it. He who spends that time in mere recreation, which may be employed in some useful business, most certainly wastes it.

15. If at any time you recreate yourself by playing with others at any sort of Game, be sure never to play for so much as to be under any great concern whether you win or lose. Where Men play for so much as to be eagerly concerned about it, I see no diversion there can be in it, except it be the hope they have of winning, from those who play or bet with them; which if it be not coveting that which is our Neighbour's, yet I am sure comes very near it. And on the other side, if a Man loses much, it is apt to betray him to anger and fretfulness; the Consequences of which are
never

never good, and sometimes have proved very evil.

16. Endeavour to be always in good humour; but be upon your guard whenever you are inclined to be chearful or merry. And tho' sometime it may be fit to speak hastily; yet watch over yourself, and strive, if you can, never to be angry. For Mirth, if not carefully curbed and managed, will betray you to obscenity and profaneness. And Anger, always, more or less, disturbs and hinders the use of ones Reason, and makes a Man incapable, while it lasts, of acting up to the Rules of decency and prudence. And in order to the curbing and suppressing of all extravagant motions both of Mirth and Anger, let me recommend this one Rule to you; that is to say, That you always, and upon all occasions, accustom yourself to speak in a low voice. Bring yourself but once effectually and constantly to this practice, and you will soon by experience find, that Mirth and Anger are not ungovernable things. The consequence of which will be such a sweet and satisfactory calm in your mind, as is not easily to be conceived by any one that has not had experience of it.

17. And this puts me in mind of a most necessary piece of Advice; in the observation of which, you ought to be daily and hourly careful; namely, to govern your Tongue well; that you may, by the Grace and Assistance of God, keep yourself innocent from the variety of sin and scandal, of which this unruly Member is so often the occasion. And therefore, whenever you are about to join in Company, and mix in Conversation with others, fail not before-hand to make this, or the like short Prayer: *Lord, be thou pleased to set a watch upon my mouth, and to keep the door of my lips, that nothing may go out thence but what is decent and sober,*

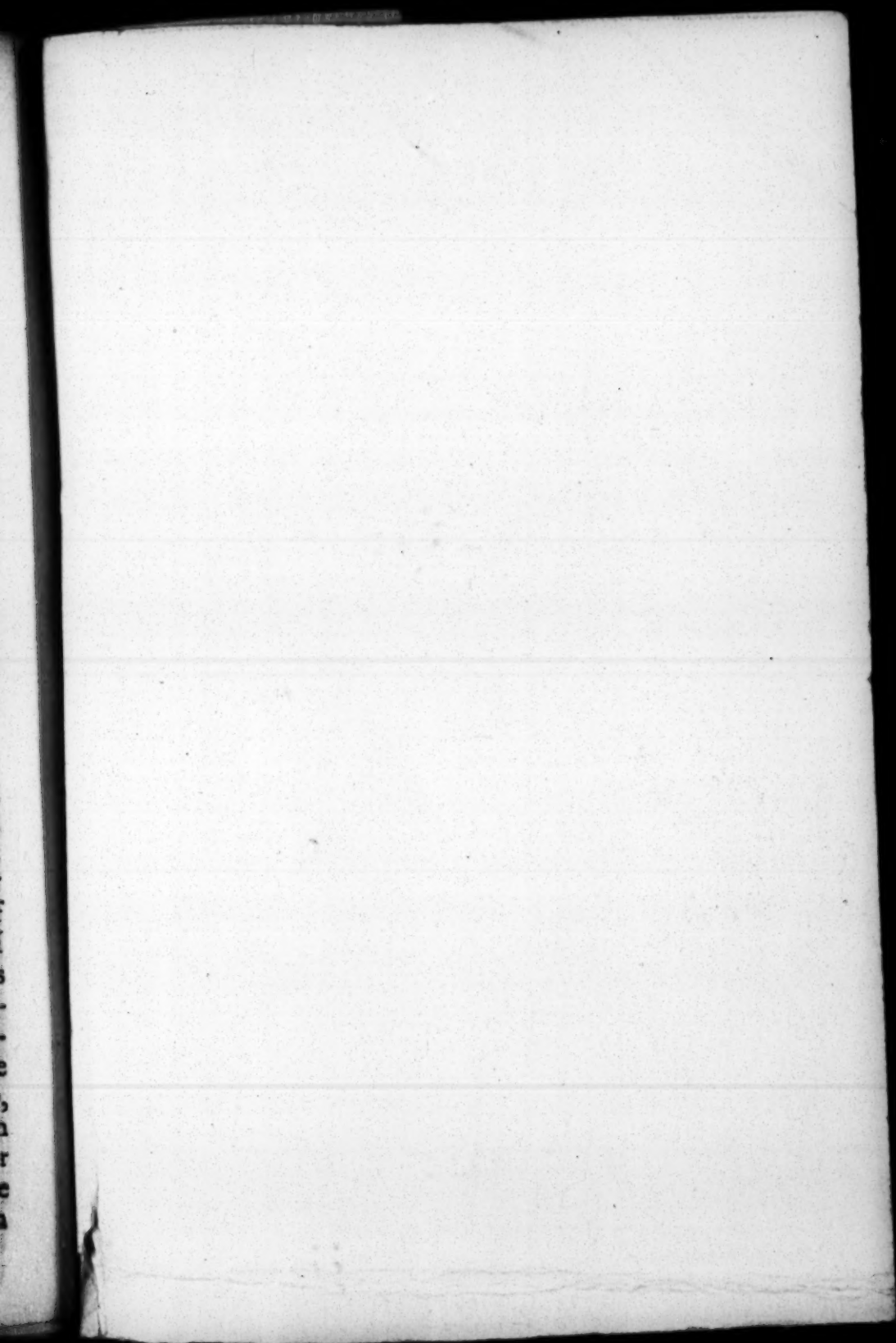
ber, and every way becoming the mouth of a Christian, and one who expects to be called to account for every idle word, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment. And accordingly, upon all occasions, let your Discourse be, First, true and sincere, and free from all lying and equivocation; Secondly, mild and charitable, avoiding all unnecessary or bitter reflections upon others (whose Faults you ought rather to conceal than expose) and all reviling and opprobrious names or expressions; which ought not to be given or used to the poorest Servant or Underling, *Matt. v. 22.* for whom *Christ* died, as much as for the greatest Men. And lastly, Let your Discourse be always agreeable to the Rules of Piety, avoiding all profane, obscene, and smutty Jest, all manner of Oaths or Curses, or evil Wishes; and all mention of the name of God or *Christ*, except it be with due honour and respect to the Divine Majesty.

18. Relieving the Poor, and giving of Alms, is a duty more often and earnestly press'd, perhaps, than any other throughout the holy Scripture. Every day then, or at least every week, be sure you fail not to lay aside something for charitable Uses, in a sufficient proportion to the worldly substance that God has blest you with. And think often with yourself after this manner: *God has been pleased so to bless my Labour and Industry, that I have gained so much, or so much, this Week, or this Month. Or God has provided for me by his good providence, that I have so much a year coming in to me. Now how much of this ought I to return, in works of Charity, to my good God, to whom I am entirely beholden for the Whole! O let me not be niggardly to the Poor, considering, that what is given to them, is lent to the Lord, Prov. xix. 17. And accepted of by Christ, as if it had been bestowed upon himself, Matt. xxv. 40.*

And

And when you have thus set apart what you design for Charity, be careful to distribute it (not to every idle, or vagrant Beggar, but) to such as you can find to be the truest Objects of Pity and Compassion.

19. Whatever business you have at any time been doing, whatever recreation you have been taking, or whatever Company you have been in; as soon as you have done, immediately look back, recollect the several Circumstances of what is past; and seriously consider whether or no you have misbehaved yourself in any particular Instance; and if you have, then beg God's Pardon, and resolve a-new, to be more careful hereafter upon the like occasion. And always in the Evening, before you betake yourself to sleep, be sure in like manner to look back upon the Transactions of the whole day, giving God still the Glory of what you have done well, and craving his forgiveness for what you have done amiss; together with his Grace and Assistance, that you may do better for the time to come. And altho' sometimes, in a Morning, business may so surprize you, as not to give you much time for your Devotion, yet at Night you may surely borrow a little time, even from your sleep, to be bestowed in private upon the service of Almighty God: For the manner of doing which, I again refer you to some of those excellent Books of Piety and Devotion, of which I have made mention *Seet. 7.* But if your business keeps you up never so late, or however tired you may be with the labour of the day, yet never settle yourself to sleep, without seriously and devoutly saying some such short Prayer as that which I have there directed for the Morning; and then conclude with that same Prayer and Ejaculation which I have set down *Seet. 1.* at the beginning of these Directions.



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